

## SYNOD OF VIRGINIA.

At its meeting in Charlottesville the Synod received a very gratifying report from the Virginia Synodical, showing that it is doing a most excellent work.

The Synod approved of the movement of the Synodical to appoint a secretary of young people's work, who will give her whole time to the development of this work in the churches of the Synod. It also approved of the proposition to hold young people's conferences.

The Synod for the first time appointed a committee on young people's work.

## BRICK HOUSES FOR CONGO.

Those who attended the Foreign Mission Conference at Montreat in August were deeply moved by the appeals that were made for better homes for our missionaries in Africa, few having ever before realized how unsanitary are the houses in which they have been living all these years. Just mud houses they are, with thatched roof and wide verandas on all sides, which are necessary to keep the rains from melting the walls, but which also keep out the light and sunshine, making the interiors damp and the corners dark, fine harboring places for rats, roaches and snakes. To hear the women missionaries tell of exciting experiences with snakes and other creatures which invade their houses may seem just part of the adventure of life in the tropics, but when a big snake is found under the basket in which the baby has been sleeping, and when a spreading adder runs across the pedal of the sewing machine, it would seem time to put a stop to such thrills. (If, by the way, it were your baby in the basket, and your feet on the pedal of the machine, what would you do?)

More serious still, the germs of African fever, malaria and dysentery are carried by flies and mosquitoes, and as it is impossible to screen these houses, they have full swing for their deadly work.

Never have our missionaries complained of their homes in Congo; rather, they have tried to picture the conditions over there as brightly as possible. What, then, caused a revelation of things as they are? Why, just a mother's love and a mother's heartache at the necessity for leaving her three-year-old child in this country because she knew its life would be the forfeit if she took it back to such a home! She told the whole truth, not only for her own sake, but for the sake of all those who are burning out their lives for Africa.

Does the Church realize the price we have paid for the Congo? Mr. Lapsley, Mrs. Morrison, Dr. Morrison and nine little children of our missionary homes have been the victims of African fever, and those who know, unhesitatingly say that some of these precious lives were unnecessarily sacrificed because of bad housing. Are we willing to face the fact and let the tragedy perpetuate itself?

Those who have seen our missionaries to Africa, and have heard them speak, know that they are our very finest. Can it be possible that we will allow these splendid young men and women to continue making the greatest sacrifices and not safeguard their lives in every way possible? Shall we expect them to continue to live in houses in which we ourselves would not live? "No," said those who heard and felt their hearts burn as they listened. So a group of men and women decided that a fund must be raised which should provide a brick house for at least each family hav-

ing little children. Such a house would cost \$2,400, the brick to be made on the mission compound. Mrs. T. S. Bryan, of Columbia, S. C., was appointed treasurer of this fund, and all contributions should be sent to her. The missionaries were told to count on the friends at home, and on the strength of this promise the little mother whose story set the ball rolling, has taken her baby back to Africa with her.

To all women, especially mothers, this thing comes very close home. Surely we can deny ourselves some indulgence, some luxury or even some necessity for such a cause.

An account of how the women of one church found a way may be suggestive to others. The Woman's Auxiliary of the First church, Spartanburg, S. C., held a praise service in October. The pastor's wife, Mrs. Gilmore, who is chairman of Foreign Missions, wrote two hundred and fifty personal notes, stating the object of the meeting and asking that with each gift be enclosed an unsigned statement as to some blessing for which the donor wished to give thanks. While these slips were being read the money was counted, and when the announcement was made that nearly four hundred dollars had been given there was great rejoicing. The money is still coming in, and from unexpected sources, which show the strength of such an appeal, and that people need only to know of the need to give gladly.

Oh, friends, let us make haste!

## THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

## PETER AND JOHN ASLEEP IN GETHSEMANE.

Mark 14:12-54. Dec. 7, 1919.

**Golden Text:** Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.—Mark 14:38.

**Additional Material for Teachers:** Matt. 26:36-56; Luke 22:39-54; John 18:1-11.

**Primary Topic:** An Angel Strengthening Jesus.

**Lesson Material:** Luke 22:39-43.  
**Memory Verse:** There appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.—Luke 22:43.

**Junior Topic:** Peter and John Fail to Help Jesus.

**Memory Verse:** Mark 14:37.  
**Intermediate Topic:** Sleeping On Duty.

**Senior and Adult Topic:** Jesus' Dependence Upon His Disciples.

**Additional Material:** Acts 22:17-21; 26:19-23; 2 Cor. 11:23-28; 2 Tim. 4:7, 8; Heb. 11:32-12:3; Rev. 2:10.

The last Passover had been celebrated. The Lord's Supper had been instituted. Jesus had washed the feet of his disciples. He had taught them many lessons. Judas had gone to the chief and "they were glad." He had sold his Master and Saviour for less than he could have sold a slave for. Peter had made his vow of loyalty, and Jesus had told him how he would break it by base denial.

When these things had taken place Jesus went with the eleven out of the crowded city to the quiet garden of Gethsemane. The present garden of that name is about three-quarters of a mile from the wall of the city. It is almost square, being 150 by 160 feet. It has in it eight venerable olive trees, which some think are the very trees which grew there in the Saviour's day. The garden of that day was rather what we would call a park, being a place where shrubs

and trees were planted to give shade and the opportunity of quiet retirement.

John tells us (18:1) that "Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples." It may have been a public garden or it may have been the private property of some friend of Jesus.

Jesus knew what was ahead of him, and he felt the need of communing with the Father. He took with him the eleven disciples. He had found that they did not at all understand what was before him and them. He realized that they would not comprehend his feelings. But he thought that his inner circle of friends ought to be able to understand the situation. He needed their companionship and their support. While he could unburden his heart only to his Father, still he wanted his friends nearby.

He told these three of the great sorrow which was crushing the life out of his soul. All that he asked of them was that they should watch while he prayed. As much as they loved him, they did not realize the truth of what he said sufficiently to arouse them to serious thought. Had they realized what was in store for their Master, it could not have been said of them that they slept and left him to bear his burdens alone. There are too many Christians today who are ignorant of conditions for the same reason that the disciples were. They are taken up with their own ideas about religion and their duty, instead of learning from their Master and accepting his teachings.

We are accustomed to thinking of the sufferings of the Saviour as beginning when he was nailed to the cross, or at least when his mock trial with its abuse and buffetings began. The fact is that his sufferings in Gethsemane seem to have been, so far as we can judge, as great as any that he endured. It was only then that he cried to the Father for deliverance. That cry showed the intensity of his suffering. On his soul had been laid the sin of the world and its burden of guilt and shame was so great that with all his divine strength he felt that it was more than he could bare. But with it all there was no wavering on his part. His prayer was that if the Father could find some other way for him to accomplish the salvation of sinners, he would like for Him to do so. Yet he expressed his entire willingness to bear the burden and drink the cup of suffering to the dregs, if that was the Father's will.

We would be so much better off, and be so much better Christians, if we would be more willing to do God's will, rather than to do our will.

It is to be noticed that Jesus did not severely reprove the tired and sleeping disciples. He only expressed his regret that they could not keep watch with him. And that regret no doubt was based chiefly upon the fact that they had not accepted his teaching about his approaching death. Jesus is very considerate and merciful in his dealing with his people, notwithstanding their ignorance and indifference. This attitude on his part ought to make us all the more anxious to find out his will concerning us and to do whatever he would have us to do.

Jesus came leading the forces of the chief priests, composed of a company of the Temple guard and a mob of others, armed with swords and staves. According to the sign Judas had given them, he advanced and kissed Jesus. It was customary for men who were friends to kiss each other when they met. So by this act he said to Jesus and the disciples

that he was Jesus' friend. But this same act said to the mob that he was Jesus' enemy and that he wanted him to be arrested.

Peter was now wide awake. He remembered that he had said: "Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended" (Matt. 26:33). "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death" (Luke 22:33). Now was the time, he thought, to show his determination and his courage. In order that he might be ready for whatever might occur in those troublous times, he had provided himself with a sword. Standing by his Master, he struck at the first man to approach, who happened to be the servant of the high priest, Malchus by name, and cut off his ear. Jesus turns and bids him put up his sword and warns him that success will not come by such means. He then turns to the wounded man, as though unconscious of anything but his need, and heals him, when it might have been expected that he would be thinking only of his own troubles and the danger that faced him.

When he had permitted himself to be arrested and bound and led away, we are told that all of the disciples left him and fled. John seems to have rejoined him before they reached the palace of the high priest. Peter "followed him afar off." John went with Jesus into the house of the high priest. When he knew that Peter was at the door, he went out and secured admission for him. Then Peter's trouble began. His fleeing away from Jesus had shown him his weakness, but he had not found the source of strength, so when the test came he did not have his own self-confidence even, and he had no other strength to rely upon. The result was that he could not stand the test. Peter's sad experience shows us how weak is human nature, and how unable we are to stand temptation.

Here again we have the evidence of the compassion and love of Jesus. He merely looked upon the sinning Peter. We may be sure that his look combined sorrow and regret, compassion and love. It brought Peter to repentance and he wept over his sins, and he was forgiven.

Jesus will always forgive those who repent.

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES

## TRUTHS JESUS TAUGHT.

M., Dec. 1. Truths about God. John 5:16-27.  
T., Dec. 2. About man. John 8:31-47.  
W., Dec. 3. About salvation. John 10:22-42.  
Th., Dec. 4. About himself. John 5:33-47.  
F., Dec. 5. About humility. Matt. 18:1-10.  
S., Dec. 6. About service. John 21:15-25.  
S., Dec. 7. Topic—Truths That Jesus Taught. Matt. 5:3-12; John 21:25. (Consecration meeting.)

What truth did Jesus teach about sincerity?  
What did Jesus teach about salvation?  
What did Jesus teach about obedience?

**Truths About God, John 5:16-27:** In these verses Jesus states a number of truths about God. He calls Him Father, making himself equal with God. He and the Father work together. The Father and the Son raise the dead to life. The Father has made him the Judge of all things. The Father gives everlasting life to those who believe on Him and the Son.

**About Man, John 8:31-47:** Man is the slave of sin and is in bondage to Satan. The Jews denied that they had ever been in bondage to any one. At that very time the whole race was in bondage to the Romans, and the Israelites had often been in bondage to their enemies. Their worst bondage was that to Satan. The only peo-

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